

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *2018 Quadrennial Regulatory Review – Review of the Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996* (MB Docket No. 18-349)

Many years ago, Congress required the FCC to conduct a review of certain media ownership rules every four years. Today, we kick off the 2018 quadrennial review of our Local Radio Ownership Rule, Local Television Ownership Rule, and Dual Network Rule. As Congress instructed, we’re seeking to determine whether these rules remain “necessary in the public interest as the result of competition.”

Specifically, we’re teeing up a broad range of questions about these rules. We want to know whether, given the current state of the media marketplace, we should retain, modify, or eliminate any of them. We’re keeping an open mind as to what, if anything, should change, and we hope to develop a robust record to guide us on the best path forward.

Our endpoints may be unclear right now, but the end goal is not: Our rules must keep pace with the modern media marketplace.

The reforms that this Commission adopted last year to do just that are already having a positive impact. For example, in 2017, we eliminated the outdated newspaper-radio cross-ownership rule. Thanks to that reform, the owner of Colorado’s *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* was recently able to purchase a radio station group in Grand Junction. I recently met Jay Seaton, who runs the *Daily Sentinel*. He told me that this transaction will help him disseminate news across more formats and appeal more to advertisers (revenue from which can be poured back into the business). As he put it, ending the cross-ownership ban was “fifteen years overdue.” And if anyone doubts the positive impact it makes in small markets in particular, “come out here and try running a newspaper sometime. It’s a real struggle.”

Additionally, consistent with the Commission’s commitment in the 2010/2014 quadrennial review order, we’re seeking comment on several diversity-related proposals that were offered in the record of that proceeding.

Given that this Notice doesn’t include any tentative conclusions, I’m disappointed that we were unable to secure a unanimous vote for it. But unfortunately, our dissenting colleague requested edits that did not comply with the law. Specifically, we were urged to delete any discussion of the Dual Network Rule from the Notice. But the Dual Network Rule is one of our media ownership rules that we are required by statute to review every four years. Whatever one’s opinion of it, refusing to include it in our quadrennial review would have violated the law. As a result, a request to remove it from the Notice doesn’t constitute a good-faith attempt to reach consensus but rather gives the appearance of looking for an excuse to dissent for political reasons.

As always, I’d like to thank the hard-working staff who worked on this item. From the Media Bureau: Ty Bream, Michelle Carey, Lyle Elder, Chad Guo, Brendan Holland, Tom Horan, Radhika Karmarkar, Julie Salovaara, Julie Saulnier, Holly Saurer, and Sarah Whitesell. And from the Office of General Counsel: Bill Dever, Dave Konczal, Jake Lewis, Bill Richardson, Bill Scher, and Royce Sherlock. Your efforts are much appreciated.